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McBride

KEYSTONE EDITION

of

Popular Plays

AS BY FIRE

THE Penn Publishing Company
Philadelphia

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AS BY FIRE

Temperance Drama in Five Acts

BY

H. ELLIOTT McBRIDE

Author of "A BIG DAY IN BULGER," etc.

Philadelphia
The Penn Publishing Company
1897

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AS BY FIRE

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MR. WILLIAM GORDON, -	*An Intemperate Husband.*
MRS. MARY GORDON, - - - -	*His Wife.*
EDWIN GORDON, -	*Their Son, twenty years of age.*
ANNIE GORDON, - -	*Their Daughter, a little girl.*
HENRY WESTFIELD, - -	*An enemy of the Gordons.*
PATRICK RYAN, - -	*A kind-hearted Irishman.*
JOHN BARNES, } SAM HUDSON, } -	*Employees of Henry Westfield.*
TOM ELKINS, - - . -	*A Saloon Keeper.*
BOB SPRATT, - - - -	*A Bar-room loafer.*

Gen.Res. 15 Nov.44 Franklin

COSTUMES.

The dress of Westfield in the last act, and the dresses of the Gordon family in the 2d and 4th acts should be very plain, indicating poverty. In the last act the dress of the Gordons should be good, showing that better times had come. In the saloon scene the loafers should be shabbily dressed, with the exception of Sam and John. It will be understood that they have plenty of Westfield's money, and are ready to "make a night of it." Their clothing though good, should be somewhat disarranged.

PROPERTIES.

A bar, bottles, glasses, etc., for the Saloon Keeper in the Saloon scene. Table, chairs, lounge, newspaper, gun. Paper for agreement, pens and ink, pistol, stool.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION.

About one hour.

AS BY FIRE

ACT I

SCENE.—*A room in* MR. GORDON'S *house. Table* C., *chairs* R., *and lounge* L. *The room is plainly furnished, indicating poverty.* MR. GORDON *seated, with a newspaper in his hand.*

MR. GORDON. I thought I had subdued this terrible thirst for intoxicating liquor, but it has come upon me again, and I feel that I must yield. I have not tasted strong drink within the past month, but to-day the thirst has come upon me again. I know I should not yield; I know I should stay away from the saloon, and yet I cannot restrain myself. (*Rises and lays down his paper*) Ay, the thirst is upon me, and I cannot conquer it—I cannot drive it away. If I could only drink and conceal it from my wife and my darling Annie, I would not hesitate for an instant. I would give up. I would drink myself to death and end this intolerable craving for rum. But they are so completely disheartened and so miserable and wretched that I would gladly save them from further trouble and disgrace. Hesitate as I may, it is always the same. When the desire for drink comes upon me, I yield my manhood, I give up everything to quench this intolerable desire for drink. I have brought my family to poverty, but I thought the turning point had come, and I would drink no more. I looked forward with hope that I would regain my former position in society, and I believed that the encouraging smiles and the kind words of my wife and child would enable me to withstand temptation. But the thirst has come upon me again with redoubled fury, and I must yield. I cannot shake it off. I must have rum! Oh! what a slave I am! (*Is about to go off*, L., *when* EDWIN GORDON *enters*, R.)

EDWIN. Hello, gov'nor!

MR. GORDON. Edwin, have I not told you that you must not address me in that way? I warn you again that you

must give heed to what I say, and you must not address me as the governor.

EDWIN. All right, gov'nor; I'll mind what you say.

MR. GORDON. Be careful, sir. Do not arouse me, or I'll strike you down. You are a base, ungrateful son, and I should not tolerate you.

EDWIN. Now, father, don't go on in that way. You make me feel unhappy. But did you ever look at the case calmly and dispassionately? Did you ever ask yourself the question, which is the worst, the old man or his son? The old man drinks and sets a bad example, and the young man follows that example, but he doesn't get as brutishly drunk as the old man does. Gov'nor—I beg pardon, I mean father—I want to ask you this question: Which of us is the most degraded and debased? I answer it by saying that you are. You are well up in years, and ought to know how to conduct yourself properly. You set the example—I follow it. That's right! A dutiful son should follow the example set by his illustrious father.

MR. GORDON. (*a tremor in his voice*) O Edwin! why will you torture me? I have striven with all my strength to break away from this curse that has come upon me. But it seems I cannot! I cannot! I have kept away from the saloon for four weeks, and I thought the power of the demon was broken, but to-day the awful thirst has returned—it has come upon me with irresistible force. Oh! I cannot overcome it!

EDWIN. Just my case, gov'nor; just my case exactly. I feel that I must have a drink. I can't be restrained very long. Come on, gov'nor, let's go. I'll set it up.

MR. GORDON. (*sinks down on the lounge*) My son taunts me and the demon has me in his power. Would to God I was dead and the terrible conflict ended!

EDWIN. Pooh! old man, don't say that. Never say die. Come on; I'll set it up. Then you'll feel all right. Come ahead. Don't be squeamish.

MR. GORDON. (*springing up*) Yes, I'll go—I'll go! It is impossible to do otherwise! The curse is upon me; the demon has hold of me. Let him drag me down. Why fight any longer against him? What care I now for my poor weeping wife and my suffering daughter? Let them go! let them go! I must drink and drown my remorse.

(*Exit* MR. GORDON, *hastily*, L.)

EDWIN. When the gov'nor takes a notion to go he goes rapidly.

(*Enter* MRS. GORDON, R.)

MRS. GORDON. I thought your father was here.

EDWIN. No; the gov'nor has just stepped out. Gone to get a drink of distilled damnation.

MRS. GORDON. (*alarmed*) Edwin, what do you mean?

EDWIN. Just what I say. The old man has gone on a gallop to the saloon. He doesn't care a fig for you and Annie now. He's got desperate—he's going to drink deep and have it over. He says he wishes he was dead, and the terrible conflict ended. I don't see any conflict about it. I think it's grand—this drinking and carousing and living a jolly, devil-may-care life.

MRS. GORDON. (*sinking down on a chair*) O Edwin! you are breaking your mother's heart.

EDWIN. Yes, that's what you've been telling me for the past two years; but I think it's not broken yet. Mother, you've got a pretty tough heart, and it is well that you have. The gov'nor drinks and I drink, although I think I am rather a moderate drinker, and between the gov'nor and me we give you a pretty uncomfortable time. I sympathize with you, mother; but I can't wait here to talk to you. As the old man said, the curse is upon me, and I feel that I must have a drink. Good-bye, old lady; you need not expect me home to dinner. I'm off for a jolly time and a regular spree. Good-bye, my poor suffering mother—over the left.

MRS. GORDON. (*rising*) Stop, Edwin; stop! Merciful God, is my aching heart to be wrung to its utmost? Stop, my son, for one moment. Let me plead that you will no longer treat me in this way. What have I done—oh! what have I done to merit it? Hear me, Edwin. Turn now; oh! I beseech you, turn from your evil ways. If you care not for your own happiness, and your soul's eternal welfare, do you not care for me? Do you want to break my heart and send me down to my grave in wretchedness and woe? Your father has gone to the saloon—he has broken his promise. The tempter has come, and now I fear it is too late for him ever to reform. Oh! my son, will you not stand by me now in my overwhelming woe? Will you not be my comfort and my support and help me to bear up under this terrible trial? I thought your father was safe. I fancied that having stood firm for so long a time perhaps the desire for strong drink had been overcome. But the happy vision is past; he has returned again to his cups.

EDWIN. Cut it short, mother. You're a pretty fair

speaker; but the thirst is upon me, as the old man says, and I must be off. I haven't had a dram to-day.

MRS. GORDON. O Edwin! let me implore you; do not go—do not drive me to despair. Think of your father's inevitable ruin and disgrace—think of your suffering mother and sister.

EDWIN. I'm thinking more just now about your suffering son. I haven't had a drink since yesterday, and, of course, I'm suffering. How could it be otherwise? Mother, you're a pretty fair temperance lecturer; but I can't wait. I'm like the gov'nor, the spell is upon me, and I must away.

(*Exit* EDWIN, L.)

MRS. GORDON. (*sinks down*) Merciful Father! what is there to live for? No hope for reformation now! No hope! (*In her misery she clasps her hands and bows her head.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II

A well-furnished room. HENRY WESTFIELD *alone.*

HENRY. At last I am victorious. I have worked and waited for this, and now I am rewarded. When Mary Arlington turned away from me and became the wife of William Gordon, I vowed that I would have my revenge, and that they both should in some way feel my wrath and my hate. I had come into possession of a large amount of money, and I was willing to sacrifice it all to accomplish my ends. I was determined they should suffer. So I planned that William, who was known as a man of strictly temperate habits, should be led into the path of the drunkard and finally go down to a drunkard's grave. Mary was quite lofty in her manner, and I determined that she should be brought low and suffer all the misery and disgrace of a drunkard's wife. Successfully have I carried out my vow —that both should suffer and be brought low. William Gordon is now a drunken sot; he is so far down that I have no fears for the result. It is easy to continue on the downward road when a drunkard gets as far as William Gordon is now. He cannot last long. He goes in rags, and the village boys hoot at him as he passes along. (*Laughs*) Ha, ha! ha, ha! I have worked and waited for this, and now it has come. Oh! how sweet my revenge is! Pretty Mary Gordon may toss her head now, with her husband a drunken idiot and her son following fast in his footsteps. Oh! I have waited for this, and now I am rewarded! For a time, it was slow work. The men I hired to lead him on laid their plans poorly, and were too slow in executing them to accomplish much. But I was not to be thwarted, and I bent my own energies entirely and completely to the work. It was necessary, above all things, to be cautious, but at last he fell into my power, and I have effected his ruin. Yes, he is down now, and fairly launched for perdition. Oh! how I rejoice over his downfall! And no language can describe the pleasure I feel in dragging his wife into the depths of degradation and despair. Twenty-three years have passed since my plans were laid. It was slow work, but with my hired agents I have followed him constantly. I planned for them—I urged them on, till at length he became a tippler. Then the way was easy; he

was on the downward path, and soon became a drunkard. I have been termed an unscrupulous man, but what care I? I have accomplished my purpose, and I am happy. Ha, ha! He is a drunken sot, and his son is following fast in his footsteps. My revenge is sweet!

(*Enter* JOHN BARNES *and* SAM HUDSON, L.)

JOHN. Mr. Westfield, we are here at your request.

HENRY. 'Tis well. Your work is almost done. William Gordon has gone so far on the downward road that I think it is hardly necessary to follow him farther.

SAM. (*intoxicated*) Jis' what I think, Mr. Westfield. He's safe on the road to perdition, and all thanks to you.

HENRY. Sir, are you drunk? Have I not told you that you must not come into my presence when you are intoxicated?

SAM. Huh! Yer oughtn't to be so partic'lar about sich a little thing as that when you've spent so many years tryin' to drag Mr. Gordon and his family down to destruction. They're gone to the devil now, sure enough, and you did the work. That is, you paid me and John to do the work. You've paid up purty well, but we want a big haul now, when the work's finished.

JOHN. (*aside to Sam*) Hush, Sam; you'll spoil matters. Let me do the talkin'.

SAM. I won't hush; I know what I'm sayin'. I've been workin' for this' old villain for ten years, tryin' to get this respectable family of the Gordons broken up and destroyed, and now when it's done I'm goin' to have a big haul. So are you, John, and there's no use in beating around the bush about it—no, not a particle.

HENRY. Be silent, sir. Let your partner do the talking.

SAM. I *won't* be silent. D'ye understand that? I'm kind of aroused, and I'll talk as much as I have a mind to. John can talk too, but I'll let you see that *I* can't be gagged by any old devil sich as you are. What do you think of yourself, any how, draggin' a respectable man down to the drunkard's hell, and draggin' me purty nigh to the same place? Afore I went into your employ, I was decent and respectable, but I was out of work, and you hired me at two dollars a day, and as much as I could drink, to dog that man's steps and force him to become a drunkard. And not only that, you supplied the money I needed to buy the drinks for Mr. Gordon. And what's Mr. Gordon to-day? And what am I to-day? *Drunkards!* And we're both standin' at hell's trap-door, ready to be pitched

in. You've accomplished your devilish purpose, old man, in regard to William Gordon, and you've done more—you've purty nigh ruined me besides. Of course, I have no family on the point of starvation, as Bill Gordon has, but I'm purty nigh ruined, and to make up for this direful wreck I must have ten thousand dollars.

HENRY. Sir, are you insane?

SAM. Insane! No, jist a little drunk. But I know what I'm sayin'. I'm posted about what I am utterin', you bet.

HENRY. I'll never pay you such a sum as that.

SAM. Yes, you will! If you don't, I'll expose you, then I'll burn up all your property—yes, every house in the village—and after that I'll murder you. Yes, I'll cut your throat. And it would be a righteous act, too, to murder such a fiend as you are. See what you've done by the use of your money. You've dragged the Gordon family into disgrace and despair. You've sent me and Bill Gordon to hell, or almost there, and now you don't want to pay me for the work. But I declare you *shall* pay me, or I'll cut your throat.

HENRY. (*to* JOHN) Can't you take this man away? I'll have no dealings with an intoxicated man.

SAM. I tell you I'm not intoxicated. I'm only jist a little set up and primed for doin' business. I know what I'm sayin', and I tell you, you shall have dealin's with me. If I *am* intoxicated, we will transact the business now. Do you understand that, you old fiend?

HENRY. (*to* JOHN) Take him away, and come again to-morrow.

JOHN. Let us go now, Sam. I know Mr. Westfield will do what is right. You know he has been liberal. We have lived on his money—we have had an easy time. Let us go now and come again to-morrow. You know we are not quite in a condition to-day for doin' business.

SAM. Shut up, John—none of your gab. I know I *am* in a condition for doin' business—jist as good a condition as I'll ever be in. He's ruined Bill Gordon and he's ruined me, and now he doesn't want to pay up. But he shall pay up. I must have his note or the money afore I leave the house. Otherwise he shall be exposed. After that I'll fire all his houses and burn up all his property, and then I'll cap the climax by murdering him. I'm aroused, and I know what I'm doin'.

HENRY. Must I endure this? Must I stand here and listen to the insults of this drunken scoundrel?

SAM. (*angrily*) Who is it you're callin' a scoundrel? Who

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could be more of a scoundrel than you, yourself, old Westfield? Who but a scoundrel would hand out money to bring Bill Gordon's family to ruin and degradation, and make John and me drink ourselves into perdition? You've got mighty squeamish all at once. This great show of virtue is only a plan to put off payin' up. But you've *got* to pay up—yes, you have! I must have ten thousand dollars to start fresh with. I'm goin' to try to live an upright life. I'm goin' to get put into a hospital so's I can get this awful thirst for intoxicatin' liquors broken up. Then when I come out, I'm goin' to buy a farm worth ten thousand dollars, join the church, and try to live an upright life. Stop! I've got an idea. You can jist stand there with horror depicted on your face till I come back. I have an idea that I can fetch you to your senses

(*Exit* SAM, L.)

HENRY. I cannot have any dealings with this man in his present state. Can you not keep him away?

JOHN. No; I can do nothing now. He seems to have grown desperate. I s'pose you'd better plank down the ten thousand. That 'pears to be the only way for you to get out of the difficulty.

HENRY. Oh! I can't do that! I can't do that! It would take all I have. Haven't I been liberal with you?

JOHN. Yes; I haven't any reason to complain on that score.

HENRY. Does he mean that ten thousand will do for both of you?

JOHN. Well, I think not! My price is five thousand. You see I am more moderate than Sam.

HENRY. Oh! I can't! I can't! That would be fifteen thousand.

JOHN. Correct. Fix it up and let us go.

HENRY. Oh! I'll never agree to that. It's base extortion. I will not pay it; it will take all I have.

JOHN. Yes, I s'pose it would. You said ten thousand would take all you had; so it's reasonable to suppose that when fifteen thousand comes out of your pocket you won't have much left to live on.

(*Enter* SAM *with a shot-gun in his hand*, L.)

SAM. (*raising the gun*) Now plank down, or I'll shoot.

HENRY. (*cowering*) Oh! you wouldn't do that!

SAM. Well, you'll see purty soon if I won't. I'm jist about drunk enough to not care a picayune for anybody,

and I'm just about worked up to the shootin' point. Plank down or be popped over!

HENRY. (*frightened*) Oh! oh! Help! Murder!

SAM. Oh! you needn't screech! There isn't anybody in hearin' distance.

JOHN. Sam, put in my bill, too. It's five thousand.

SAM. (*still holding the gun leveled at his head*) There! You hear that? Fifteen thousand, or I'll put the trigger.

HENRY. Oh! don't! Don't shoot! Have mercy!

SAM. Don't say nothin' about mercy, you old Hottentot. You didn't have any mercy on Bill Gordon and his family.

HENRY. (*trying to appear calm*) Would you murder me?

SAM. Jist as lief as not. Plank down, or I'll shoot.

HENRY. Take away your gun. Yes, I'll pay you.

SAM. (*lowering his gun*) All right. I think that's the best way anyhow. It's better for people to pay their debts than to be shot down in their tracks. Then, again, it's better for me to have the money which rightfully belongs to me than to have my soul stained with your treacherous blood. Yes, you have done well, and you have my sincere thanks. (*Produces paper*) Now sign this paper and we'll go.

HENRY. (*glancing over the paper*) Oh! I cannot sign this! Oh! no, no!

SAM. Can't, eh? Then I s'pose I'll have to shoot. (*Raises the gun.*)

HENRY. Oh! would you—would you shoot? Don't be unreasonable. Hear what I have to say.

SAM. Sign or I'll shoot. (*Levels the gun at his head*) Sign without delay. (JOHN *brings pen and ink from the table.*)

HENRY. Oh! give me a minute!

SAM. No; not more'n half a minute. Sign or I'll shoot.

HENRY. (*nervously*) Yes, I'll sign. (*Takes the pen.* SAM *lowers his gun and then he writes.*)

SAM. (*takes the paper and examines it*) Yes; that's all right. (*Puts the paper in his pocket*) Now you are a free man; you can go where you please. You can walk forth feeling that you are entirely untrammeled.

HENRY. My money is gone! I'm a ruined man!

SAM. So'm I; so's Bill Gordon. And you did it, you human hyena. But I'm worth ten thousand dollars now, and I rejoice because I can buy a home and start in a new path. I'm going to do better. I'm going to try to get along on five drams a day. We've got this matter settled, and haven't shed any blood. Let's go, John.

HENRY. (*excitedly*) Oh! stop! stop! Don't go! Will you

leave me without a penny in the world? You have my all; I am ruined.

SAM; So'm I; so's Bill Gordon. Turn about is fair play, you know, and it's nothin' but justice. (*Gesticulating awkwardly*) "Let justice be done though the heavens should fall."

(*Exit* SAM *and* JOHN, L.)

HENRY. (*sinking into a chair*) "Oh! treble woe!" Why did I put myself into the power of these villains? They have done their work well, but the price, oh! the price! I am not worth a penny now. Where shall I go and what shall I do? Truly, the way of the transgressor is hard. I set out with the determination of seeing William Gordon and his wife brought to ruin and disgrace. For twenty-three years this has been the sole object of my life. The work has been accomplished. William Gordon is a drunkard, past all reformation, and his family disgraced and starving. Yes, my object has been accomplished, but where am I? (*Rises*) Well, the same spirit that in all these long years has nerved me for the work must be my only support. I have nothing now—nothing. These men were already well paid for their work, but they saw their power and they have taken my all. Oh! was it worth while? What a wrong I have done! Retribution must come. The poor-house is in view. In trying to ruin William Gordon I have ruined myself. Retribution! retribution! Ha! ha! (*Laughs wildly and staggers out*, L.)

CURTAIN.

ACT III

SCENE.—*A bar-room.* TOM ELKINS *behind bar.* EDWIN GORDON, JOHN BARNES, SAM HUDSON, *and* BOB SPRATT *seated around the room, all seemingly in a maudlin condition.*

SAM. Wouldn't live in sich a place as this. I'd rather live in a city or a consid'able kind of a town. This town's not big enough for me.

EDWIN. No; it takes a big town to hold you.

SAM. Yes, that's so. I've got money to spend now, and I'm going to spend it. Yes, I am. I've been a working man, but now I'm goin' to rest.

BOB. Ben a workin' man; ha! ha!—that's purty good. (*Slaps his leg and laughs*) Ho, ho, ho!

SAM. Well, that's so; but of course there wasn't many as was acquainted with the fact.

BOB. Correct! Yes, that's correct. Not many as was acquainted with the fact. (*Laughs*) Ho, ho, ho! Yes, that's a fact.

SAM. Bob, what's er use of you ho-hoin' and cuttin' up so? (*Rises*) But come up, all of yer; come up, and le's have another drink. Walk up, Bob; walk up, John; walk up, Edwin. I have the money, an' I can pay spot cash.

TOM. You're the kind of a man I like to sell to. (*They come forward to the bar.*)

SAM. Yes; I s'pose. That's my case, anyhow. When I had anything to sell, I allers did like to sell for the cash. Now, gel'men, name your poison.

JOHN. Whiskey straight.

EDWIN. Brandy.

BOB. Forty-yard whiskey.

SAM. I'll take rum to make me hum.

TOM. Well, don't hum too much. Some of you are getting right noisy. You know I keep a respectable house.

JOHN. Respitable house; is that what it is?

EDWIN. That's purty good! (*Laughs*) Ha, ha, ha! Respectable house (*laughs*)—Ha, ha, ha!

TOM. Well, young man, what have you to say in regard to that?

EDWIN. Oh! nothin', nothin'!

TOM. If you don't consider it a respectable house, you

needn't come. You can't lay any very great claim to respectability, can you?

SAM. Shut up, Tom. Needn't git obstrepeevious. Don't you know he's a young feller? Needn't git angry about nothin'.

TOM. It's all right.

SAM. Well, here goes the rum which is cal'lated to make a feller hum. (*They all drink, making considerable noise as they do so.*)

JOHN. I say, Bob—let's see, your name's Spratt. Yes—hic—I've read about you—no, I reckon it must have been your brother, Jack Spratt—he couldn't eat any fat. (*The others laugh, and they all go noisily to their seats.*)

TOM. Too much noise, gentlemen.

SAM. Pooh! Don't call this noise, do you? Well, I reckon there'll be more noise afore I get through drinkin'. I'm goin' to fill up to-night—get on a reg'lar tear.

JOHN. So'm I. We've got the money—haven't we, Sam?

SAM. Well, yes, I rather cal'late we have. (EDWIN *commences to whistle*, BOB *strikes a match and lights his pipe.*)

JOHN. Look here, mis'er—hic—lan'lord—look here. Can you tell me where Moses was when—when—

BOB. (*laughs*) He's beginnin' to talk Scripter.

JOHN. Shut up, now, till I git this co—this co—this kenundrum asked—hic. Can you tell me where Moses was—hic—I declare, I b'lieve I've forgot that 'nundrum.

TOM. Gentleman, I must request you to make less noise. You know I must keep up the character of my house.

JOHN. Yes, tha's a fac'—hic—keep it up—keep up the character of the house, as it were—hic.

BOB. Edwin, you're the youngest. 'Sposin' you sing a song.

EDWIN. Me sing a song? Why, I ain't no singer—no, not as I knows on—or—er—I ain't no vocalist.

JOHN. Oh! yes, go 'head an'—hic—an' sing us a song. (EDWIN *rises and stands unsteadily while he sings a few lines. Any suitable song can be selected. At the close the others applaud.*)

JOHN. Tha's purty good song.

SAM. Now, wha's the nex' thing?

BOB. The nex' thing is to have a smoke. (*Puffing smoke.*)

SAM. Who's got the mos' money in this house?

JOHN. I reckon I could—hic—answer that quession.

SAM. But you ain't 'lowed to answer.

BOB. I s'pose the one that's got the most money pays for the drinks. Is that the way of it?

EDWIN. Yes, I think that would be right. That'd suit me, any how.

JOHN. We might—hic—we might vote on that quession. That's the way to do nowadays—vote on anything and everything.

BOB. That's reminds me that I've got a story to tell.

SAM. A story! Whoop! You're the feller. I allers did like stories—'tic'larly bear stories.

BOB. This isn't a bear story, nor 'tisn't a possum story, nor a coon story, but jist a story 'bout a man. It runs somehow this way: A man started out once to go across a field. He had a dog and a gun along with him—yes, 'f course he had, an' he was huntin' wild animals—but, as I said afore, this isn't a bear story, an' the man wasn't huntin' for bears—just went out a-bird shootin', as it were. He went across one field, and then he went across another field, still he didn't see anything worth shootin' at. Then he went through a woods. After that he went down a lane, an' then he went 'cross a potato patch, as it were, still he didn't see nothin'. Then he went home.

JOHN. An'—hic—what'd he shoot?

BOB. Didn't shoot anything—no, 'f course not. He jist went out huntin', you see.

SAM. (*laughs*) Ha, ha, ha! Tha's a funny story! Ha, ha, ha!

JOHN. Tha's purty good! tha's purty good! Didn't shoot anything. (*Rises*) I say, fellers, come up an' have anurrer drink. Tha's a pur'y good story, an' we ought to wash it down.

(*All rise and go forward noisily.*)

BOB. Bully! Bully for you.

SAM. Whoop! I'm gittin' waked up. (*Shouts*) Whoop!

EDWIN. Purty good story, that. (*Laughs*) Ha, ha, ha!

JOHN. Yes, come right up—hic. I'll set it up for everybody.

TOM. Gentlemen, I must again ask you to make less noise. (*Busies himself setting down bottles and glasses.*)

EDWIN. Can't do it. I've been tryin' to keep quiet, but t'aint no use. I just feel like hollerin'.

SAM. Yes; this is kind 'f noisy whiskey that we've been drinkin'. That is—it kinder makes a feller feel like hollerin'.

JOHN. Now, fellers, name your poison an' go ahead. (*They come up to the bar and continue their noise.*)

BOB. Here's a health to—to all you fellers. (*Drinks.*)

EDWIN. Here's the same er—yes, jus' the same. (*Drinks.*)

SAM. I guess, 'f we go on this way, mebbe—well, er—mebbe we'll soon be pur'y full. (*Drinks.*)

JOHN. Here's to the United States 'f America, or thereabouts—hic—as it were.

(*Enter* ANNIE, L.)

ANNIE. Edwin! Edwin!

SAM. Edwin, there's the little gal.

BOB. Yes, there's your little sister comin' after you.

EDWIN. Wha's that?

BOB. There's your little sister comin' after you.

EDWIN. (*turning and speaking crossly to* ANNIE) What brought you here? Get out of this.

ANNIE. (*pleadingly*) O Edwin! won't you come home? Mamma wants you.

EDWIN. (*angrily*) Get out of this and mind your own affairs. Get home, now, and don't come around botherin' me.

SAM. Now, don't be so cross with the child. (*To* ANNIE) Yes, poor little dear, we'll send him soon's possible.

EDWIN. What are you meddlin' with my affairs for?

SAM. Shut up; you're drunk. Don't I know what I'm sayin'? I'm standin' up fur the little girl.

EDWIN. You sha'n't tell me I'm drunk. By thunder, I'll smash your jaw. (*Rushes at him and strikes.*)

SAM. (*pulling out a revolver*) Stand back! No young feller's goin' to strike me. (*The others rush forward, crying, Stop! stop! Don't shoot! don't shoot!* SAM *fires and* EDWIN *falls.*)

EDWIN. Oh! I'm shot! I'm shot!

ANNIE. (*rushes forward, drops on her knees beside her brother, and cries out*) O Edwin, Edwin!

(*The others run out as the curtain falls.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV

SCENE.—*Same as in Act I.* MRS. GORDON *and* ANNIE *seated.*

MRS. GORDON. Your father has been absent now for two days. I would get some one to go to the village and bring him home, but I know how useless it will be; he would not consent to come. Probably it is better that he should be left alone. Oh! what a dreary life to lead! Full of hope for many days, then back to the blackness of despair. I thought our troubles were over; but two days ago the ungovernable thirst came upon him again, and he gave up. Had I known that the desire for drink was on him I would have done my utmost to help him to conquer it. But he spoke not of the conflict—he said nothing of the temptation to which he was subjected—he yielded and hurried away. And now I have no hope of his reformation.

ANNIE. I have prayed for poor papa ever since he was so bad before, and I was so happy because I thought my prayers were answered; but he has fallen again, and I feel so sad. Don't you think, mamma, he might have gone to the upper village? You know he wanted to find work there.

MRS. GORDON. Ah, yes! I thought so; but I heard this evening that he was at Smith's saloon, and that he has been there since yesterday morning. (*A shriek is heard outside.* MRS. GORDON *and* ANNIE *rise in alarm.*)

ANNIE. Oh! can that be papa!

MRS. GORDON. I fear it is. And he is in the wildness of delirium.

(*Enter* MR. GORDON, L., *a wild look on his face. His clothing is torn and disarranged.*)

MR. GORDON. Keep back! Why are you hounding me? Haven't I suffered enough already? Keep back! (*Sinks down with one knee on the floor.*) Why do these animals follow me—these tigers and panthers and lions and hyenas? Ah, what is that—that repulsive demon with the great, rolling, green eyes? Oh! I can't endure it! I must flee—I must run or it will devour me. (*Shrieks*) Take it away! take it away! (MRS. GORDON *and* ANNIE *run out*, R.) How can I endure this? Back, I say, back! What have I done that

you should follow me with that troop of wild animals at your heels? Back, I say, back! (*Waving his hand wildly*) Oh! can't I have rest? Can't I have rest? Why am I thus chased and hounded at every step? Now they are gone. Oh! what relief! oh! what relief! What does it all mean? What have I done that I must endure this anguish? How much better if I could die and be laid away in the quiet churchyard. I *will* die, too, if they come again. I'll cut my throat or blow my brains out. I can't endure this terrible, terrible trial. (*Pauses*) Oh! if I could only pray, perhaps I could have relief. But I can't pray—no, I can't! How can I pray when I have been drinking rum! It would be inconsistent—yes, absurd and inconsistent to look up to God for health and strength when I am following the devil and doing his bidding. The devil smiles even now because I am doing his bidding, and because I have broken my pledge. See how he rejoices! He's ready to take me. And why shouldn't I go? Can hell be worse than this? No, no! Let me pass out—let me pass down—it can't be any worse to live in hell than to live here. For days and weeks it seems that I have been in this condition. I have almost forgotten that I have a wife and a child. My son was killed in a bar-room fight—yes, killed by the devils that are after me now, and my wife and child cannot save me. I have broken my pledge, and hell is yawning to receive me. See how that demon rejoices! And can hell be worse than this? No! no! Let me pass out—let me pass down! It can't be any worse. I've broken my pledge—I've sold myself to the devil for rum. Rum is killing me, and my wife and child have turned away from me. Oh! why need I stay? If I had a knife I'd soon end this misery—I'd cut my throat—yes, I'd cut my throat, and then, perhaps, my misery would be ended. My wife and my child! Come, come! (*Calls.*) Mary! Annie! Come! come! No, they have turned away from me, too.

(*Enter* ANNIE, R.)

ANNIE. No, papa, we haven't turned away from you, but we were afraid.

MR. GORDON. (*glaring at her*) Back, devil, back! Did you come to take me before my time? Back, I say, back!

ANNIE. O papa! don't you know me?

MR. GORDON. (*wildly*) Back, I say! back to your pit. (ANNIE *runs out*, R.) I know you too well. You shall not take me, you great, insatiable, soul-destroying monster! I will not go until my time. You have me—I broke my

promise—I sold myself to you—I left my poor little girl and my broken-hearted wife and I went over to you. I gave myself up. I broke my pledge—I said I am yours forever if you will but give me rum. And now I *have* rum—yes, oceans of rum! It is all around me—it is choking me—it is burning me up! But I say, hideous monster, I will not go until my hour has come. I must have a moment yet! I must pray once—yes, I must! I cannot go until I do. (*Wails.*) And my wife and child—shall I never see them again?

(*Enter* MRS. GORDON *and* ANNIE, R.)

MRS. GORDON. William, we are here.

MR. GORDON. Back, infernal devil! Do you come to take me before my time? O merciful God! save me! (*Sinks down on the floor.* MRS. GORDON *and* ANNIE *go and kneel beside him.*)

ANNIE. Mamma, is he dead?

CURTAIN.

ACT V

SCENE.—*A room, plainly but neatly furnished. Lounge* R., *chairs* L. MR. *and* MRS. GORDON *seated.* MRS. GORDON *sewing.* ANNIE *seated on a low stool, resting her head on her father's knee.*

MR. GORDON. Mary, why not lay aside your sewing for this evening? Perhaps our little pet here will sing something for us.

ANNIE. O papa! you know I am a poor singer.

MR. GORDON. Well, you may not be one of the finest, nevertheless your mother and I are always glad to hear you.

ANNIE. Well, papa, I certainly will comply since you desire it. What shall I sing? (MRS. GORDON *lays aside her work.*)

MR. GORDON. Make your own selection, Annie.

ANNIE. Mamma, is there anything you would care to hear me sing?

MRS. GORDON. Yes, dear; I should like to hear you sing "Rest for the Weary." I never tire of that.

ANNIE. Just what I thought of singing. (ANNIE, *still seated on her stool, sings.*)

In the Christian's home in glory
There remains a land of rest;
There my Saviour's gone before me
To fulfill my soul's request.

Chorus.—There is rest for the weary,
There is rest for the weary,
There is rest for you;
On the other side of Jordan,
In the sweet fields of Eden,
Where the tree of life is blooming,
There is rest for you.

He is fitting up my mansion,
Which eternally shall stand;
For my stay shall not be transient,
In that holy, happy land.

Chorus.—There is rest for the weary,
There is rest for the weary,
There is rest for you;
On the other side of Jordan,
In the sweet fields of Eden,
Where the tree of life is blooming,
There is rest for you.

(*Noise heard off* L.)

MRS. GORDON. I think there is some one at the door.

MR. GORDON. (*rising*) I will see. (*Opens door.*)

HENRY. (*as he enters, supported by* PATRICK) May I come in? Oh! may I speak? Don't strike me down. Let me speak.

MR. GORDON. It is Henry Westfield.

HENRY. Yes, strike me down, but don't kill me—oh! don't! I want to confess; I want you to forgive me.

MR. GORDON. (*to* PATRICK) What is the meaning of this?

PATRICK. Faix, now, an' Oi don't jist undherstand it mesilf. But he axed me to come along an' show him where yez lived. He said he must see yez, as it was important. Oi reckon he'll ixplain the case to yez.

HENRY. Yes; let me explain and then let me die. But forgive me, oh! forgive me. I can't die—oh! I can't die until you first forgive me.

MR. GORDON. Mr. Westfield, why do you ask my forgiveness? You have never wronged me in any way.

HENRY. Oh! you don't know—you don't understand.

PATRICK. (*to* MR. GORDON) If ye plaze, sir, Oi think the man is purty near crazy. But he wanted me to show him the way, an' so Oi comed along.

MR. GORDON. Be seated, Mr. Westfield. I feel sure you have made a mistake; you never wronged me in any way.

HENRY. Be seated? No! No!! How can I sit down in your house? I must tell you all, and then I will go.

PATRICK. Oi think ye'd betther let him perceed.

HENRY. I brought you to poverty. When your wife refused me and married you, the devil was aroused within me, and I vowed that you should feel my wrath and my hate. I hired men to induce you to drink, and although it was slow work, yet I made them follow you, and at last you were persuaded to drink. Then they dogged your footsteps—they used every effort to make you a drunkard. No, you don't know what a villain I have been. John Barnes and Sam Hudson were the men—they were my

hired agents. Hear me through, then strike me down! But oh! forgive me! When they had once got you to drink the way became easy. I accomplished my purpose. I made you a drunkard. Then, when they believed the work done, and when I also believed that you would soon sink into a drunkard's grave, they turned on me and compelled me to give them all I had. Sam Hudson shot and killed your son Edwin in a bar-room fight, and then fled the country. Yes, my money is gone and I am myself ready for perdition. Yes, they followed you, dogged your steps, and let no opportunity slip to make you a drunkard.

MR. GORDON. And succeeded. But they were not so much to blame as I. I should have resisted temptation.

HENRY. I had plenty of money then, but I am now penniless—a wretched, despised being. Can you forgive me? Oh! can you forgive me?

MR. GORDON. Yes; I am ready to forgive you.

HENRY. (*turning to* MRS. GORDON) And you—oh! can *you* say that you forgive me?

MRS. GORDON. I assure you that I do, fully and freely.

HENRY. Bless you for the word. May God bless and keep you both. (*Going*, L.)

MR. GORDON. I want to say that you are not so much to be censured as—

HENRY. Don't say a word. I'm a wretch, and I know it; I'm a villain. You have forgiven me. I—oh—the way of the transgressor is hard. I heard singing as I came in. Will you sing again? Will you sing for me before I go? Oh, do! The way of the transgressor is—is hard.

MR. GORDON. Be seated, and our little girl will sing. (*Places chair.*)

HENRY. Yes; I will sit down now, but only for a minute. (*Sits*) The way of the transgressor—oh! why did I? Was it worth while? There is no rest for me.

MR. GORDON. Annie.

ANNIE. (*Sings the first stanza*, MR. *and* MRS. GORDON *joining in the chorus. When they close* HENRY *starts up.*)

HENRY. No; There is no rest for me. But I thank you—oh! yes, I thank you, for you have forgiven me. May God bless you! Oh! it grows dark! the night is coming. (*Rushes out*, L.)

MR. GORDON. (*to* PATRICK) Follow him and see that he is well cared for. It would be useless to ask him to stay here. Care for him kindly and at my expense.

PATRICK. Faix, an' I wull. (*Aside*) Mr. Gordon is a gintleman onyhow, or he'd niver be so kind to an inemy,

an' a blasted bad inemy, too. (*To* MR. GORDON) Yis, I'll look after him. A good avenin' to yez.

MR. GORDON, MRS. GORDON, *and* ANNIE. Good evening.

(*Exit* PATRICK, L.)

MR. GORDON. Intemperance and retribution! As by fire I have been saved from the drunkard's doom, and I go forward now with a determination, while life lasts, to battle against the assaults of King Alcohol; to endeavor to help those who, like myself, have been on the brink of ruin—on the verge of destruction.

CURTAIN.

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